

An Essay
On
The Nature and Treatment of Wounds.
Respectfully Submitted
To the Faculty of the
Homoeopathic Medical College
Of Pennsylvania
For the Degree of Doctor of Medicine.
By
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Of
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It is of importance that Surgery,
and of the first importance that this
branch of it should be thoroughly
understood by all medical men of
our country. As in many localities
there is no time to be lost in going
for a regular surgeon, or in waiting
though the many would prefer to
to find the best mode of treatment.
All, who take the science of medicine
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to find the best mode of treatment.
All who take the science of Medicine
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those who are engaged in the true
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should ever hold, as it were at their
fingers end, the anatomical relations,

And physiological conditions of
 any part or portion of the human frame.
 I say particularly those who have
 made the science of Homœopathy their
 choice, for Homœopathy is yet in her
 infancy; and if one of the followers
 of noble Hahnemann, should in a
 case of emergency betray his ignorance,
 and by that ignorance become the
 mediate cause of the death of a
 human being, who by proper treat-
 ment might have been saved, he
 would in all probability cripple the
 cause of this the only true science
 of the cure of disease, and prevent
 its beneficial influence from extending
 as soon as it otherwise might all
 over our country and the world.

Leaving suffering humanity, to suffer
 yet more by the unfortunate
 treatment of those who in themselves
 being weak, depend alas, too much upon
 the strength of their medicines;
 but yet from old association, have
 won the first confidence of the people,
 whose views of medicine have been
 so long contaminated with the
 imaginary necessity of severe
 treatment, they can only be
 converted by the timely exercise
 of that knowledge which has been
 dispensed to us by those who have
 long fought under the banner of
 Hahnemann.

Unfortunately, many who style
 themselves "Doctors of Homeopathy"

And who are supposed by the
 people to be a fair sample of the
 profession, are totally ignorant of the
first principles of our noble science,
 and are of the lowest order of
 symptomatologists, whose treatment
 of disease is a routine, and even
 of this their knowledge is very
 limited. This has been the great
 cause of the low estimate of the
 value of Homeopathy. This is the
 reason why the extension of our
 principles have not been greater.
 And although but a few years have
 passed since the great founder
 of our system first discovered and
 made applicable those principles,
 which have revolutionized the

Medical world, yet they would much sooner gain the confidence of the people, if such pretenders could be made to seek some other employment as a means of livelihood.

It is of importance then not only for the success of the practitioner, but also for the advancement of Homeopathy, that the "nature and treatment of wounds," should be thoroughly understood; as the physician may at any moment be called upon to attend a case, when immediate treatment is necessary, and where delay would be death.

The term wound, can not strictly be defined in a few words. The definition as given by different surgeons are these:

"A solution of continuity, suddenly produced by the incision, rupture, or fracture of a part."

"An injury to an organic texture by mechanical or other violence".

"A breach of continuity in the tissues of the body".

It is not necessary however to define the word, as in surgery it is used in the ordinary acceptation.

Many such injuries are the result of accident, others of design. And they vary in extent and importance, from a mere scratch, to the entire

separation of a limb from the body. All are important however, and should never be regarded as trivial; for a scratch may ultimately involve much suffering. And Hemorrhage, erysipelas, gangrene, hectic, and tetanus may occur, bringing life and limb into the most imminent danger.

Wounds are of different kinds, and may be classified thus: Incised, Lacerated, Contused, Punctured, and Poisoned.

Incised Wounds.

Are inflicted by a sharp edged cutting instrument. They are capable of speedy union by adhesion, and least liable to inflammation.

In such wounds the greatest danger is hemorrhage, especially the arterial. In treatment the first care is to arrest the hemorrhage. And it is here the physician exercises his surgical knowledge. For without fear or alarm at the great loss of blood, but with the coolness of self reliance based on an intimate knowledge of the means whereby the flow may be arrested, and his competency to apply those effectually, he exposes the wound, and sees from what vessel the blood jets out. If the vessel be small, and but little bleeding, it may be safely left to natural hemostatics.

But when the vessel is at all considerable, and the jet active, surgical means for its arrest should immediately be employed. Of these, I will mention Pressure, Plugging, Position, Cold, Ligature, and Torsion.

Pressure can be performed on the mouth of the wounded vessel itself, with the finger or thumb, until sufficient contraction has taken place to withdraw the hand, and apply within the wound, on the orifice, a dossil of lint, and the wound itself filled up with other dossils, to act as a compress, and retained in its place by a bandage over the whole. While this is being

done, pressure should be indirectly applied any where along the course of the wounded vessel, by means of a *Tourniquet*.

Plugging: is generally used in severe uterine hemorrhage, or epistaxis.

Position. Hemorrhage may sometimes cease if from the hand or foot, by placing the part in an elevated position.

Cold may be used in slight cases, to assist nature in the contraction of the bleeding mouths.

Ligature. This is of all hemostatic means, the most sure and satisfactory.

And in cases of hemorrhage from arterial wounds, is not to be superseded or omitted for light seasons.

To apply the ligature, the arterial orifice is caught by a tenaculum, and drawn from the surrounding texture, that the noose of the ligature may embrace it, and it alone.

Sometimes the spring artery forceps are preferable to the tenaculum.

In a wounded artery of any size, either punctured or cut across, two ligatures must be applied, one at the cardiac orifice, and the other at the distal; for as soon as collateral circulation is established, the distal orifice will bleed almost as profusely as the cardiac.

In deligation of an artery, one arm of the ligature is cut off, while the other is left hanging out of the

Wound, in order that separation and discharge of the noose be made certain.

Gorsion is necessary sometimes where the wounded vessel scarcely demands a ligature, but too large to be closed by pressure.

Hemorrhage being stanch'd, and the wound gently and carefully cleansed from all foreign matter, Coaptation of the opposed surfaces as accurately as possible can now be accomplished.

The principle agents in coaptation, are position, and adhesive plaster.

But in some instances, Sutures are necessary, only however, in cases where the two former can not succeed in producing proper coaptation.

For the suture acting as a foreign substance, on an already irritated surface, tends much towards producing inflammation. After first having dressed an incised wound, it should not be interfered with for a few days, except in special cases, and then only by the surgeon. If the incised wound fails to unite by the first intention, the lips swell and become red, a discharge of matter exudes, and inflammation sets in. It may now be made to unite by secondary adhesion. But if that fails, suppuration to a more or less extent takes place, and it heals by granulation. Its treatment may then come under the head of:

Lacerated Wounds.

These wounds are caused by blunt cutting instruments, or by some powerfull & violent force, in which parts are torn off. Gun shot wounds might with propriety come under this head. Lacerated wounds are attended with very little hemorrhage or pain; even when the wound is extensive, and large vessels torn apart. But they are not the less formidable on that account. Were it to be imagined, that because a wound is neither painful, nor inclined to bleed, it must be trivial, many and serious errors of diagnosis and prognosis would result. In a very few cases, wounds of this class will

heal by the first intention: but only when the sufferer is of good constitution, and in excellent health. Almost invariably they will be attended with inflammation, and more or less suppuration. The effects on the nervous system is often very great. ~~Erysipelatous~~ inflammation will sometimes follow wounds on the scalp, and is much to be feared, as by metastasis may attack the brain.

Treatment: If the wounds are confined entirely to the soft parts, they must not be removed even if only hanging by a strip of skin. They may unite, and have been known to do so, after entire separation, by cleaning the parts, and applying the detached piece on

the place it belongs. The wound should always be thoroughly cleansed, and the parts brought in coaptation, and held there entirely by position and the adhesive slips. If high inflammatory action supervenes, give internally Aconite; and if spasmodic action of the muscle manifests itself, give Chamomilla. After some days, while the parts are sloughing, there is danger of hemorrhage from the opening of some vessel. Great care and attention is necessary to prevent this. In the most severe cases, where the limb has been torn off, the bone will have to be amputated to leave an even stump. In Gun Shot wounds, the treatment is about the same as

in other wounds under this head.

They are more dangerous generally, from the quantity of foreign matter taken into the wound with the ball, which should be removed if possible.

The ball if superficial, or if easily probed had best be removed. It does no harm though to leave it imbedded in the flesh, as it becomes encysted, giving little or no trouble. If the ball in its passage should injure a bone, care must be taken to remove every splinter, as they will necrose and produce the same irritation that other foreign bodies would. If much hemorrhage ensues it is necessary to cut down to the bleeding vessel and ligate it.

Contused Wounds.

Are caused by blows or falls. There is little or no hemorrhage, but sometimes a pain of a dull aching character. The shock to the nervous system is very great. These wounds never heal kindly. There are two distinct periods in their progress: 1st that of the separation of the slough produced by the contusion 2nd that of repair by granulations, of the chasm left. The extent of the slough depends not only upon the extent but also upon the situation of the injury. The chief danger to be apprehended in wounds of this description is the super-sension of gangrene. And in all

severe cases; the surgeon should
 well consider the chances of saving
 the limb, or if it would be best to
 perform amputation. The treatment
 should consist in the attempt
 to restore the depressed vital
 condition of the injured parts;
 which may be done by using
 Arnica internally and externally,
 which may prevent mortification and
 sloughing. If however these conditions
 should arise, apply a yeast
 poultice to the part sprinkled over
 with *Carbo Vegetabilis*, and give inter-
 nally *Arsenicum*; which will assist
 nature in the separation of the
 dead tissue, and prevent its extension.
 After sloughing, an ulcer will be

left, which can be treated on general principles, and it will heal by granulation. Should an abscess form in the neighbourhood of the wound, a free incision should be practiced early.

Punctured Wounds.

Are inflicted by the penetration of a sharp and pointed instrument, which bruises and tears, as well as cuts. Hence they partake somewhat of the character of lacerated and contused wounds. When the wound enters deep into the part, there is great danger attending it, both from injury done to important parts, as arteries, veins, nerves, canals, cavities, joints; and from inflammation

occurring in the deep parts of the wound, the purulent secretion being confined, infiltration is consequently favoured, and much damage result to both part & System. There is danger also of the instrument having broken, and a part remaining buried in the wound.

Treatment: If it is supposed a part of the instrument is broken off and yet in the wound, probe the wound and find out, and extract it if possible with forceps. Hemorrhage must be arrested, by compresses to approximate the sides of the wound, or by application of cold. But if the wounded vessel be large, cut down and ligate it above and below

the perforation in it. Apply a compress moistened with Arnica over the mouth of the wound, and over this a roller gently compressing the walls of the track, which will in many cases enable them to unite by the first intention. If however irritation and inflammation follow, give Aconite, Belladonna, Chamomilla, Arsenicum, Silicea, or Carbo Vegetabilis, as may be indicated. If matter should form beneath the tendons or muscles, make a free incision early, that the secreted matter may escape. If tetanic spasm should set in, give Aconite, and Nux Vomica in alternation.

Poisoned Wounds

May be divided into three classes: wounds by Dissection; wounds by healthy animals; and wounds by diseased animals.

Wounds during dissection, are made either by the scalpel, or by a broken piece of bone. Local treatment: wash the part immediately, and suck it well with the mouth; and after sufficient bleeding is performed to cleanse the poison matter from it, touch it lightly with nitrate of silver. Should local symptoms become established, it has to be treated according to general principles.

Poisoned wounds by healthy animals. The most dangerous of this class, are

bites of venomous serpents. Yet the stings
 of insects, and bites of spiders, may some-
 times prove very serious. These latter
 may be treated by the external
 application of Carb: Ammonia, Camphor,
 or Tobacco; which will antedote the
 poisonous effects of the wound. Bites of
 serpents should be treated, if on a limb,
 by immediately applying a ligature above
 the wound, and by means of the ordinary
 cupping glass held over the part, by
 the exhaustion of the air the poison
 may be withdrawn before it has had
 time to produce its deleterious effects
 upon the system. *Podophyllum Peltatum*,
 and Cedar, have been highly recommended
 taken internally, also the free use
 of Alcoholic Stimulants.

Poisoned wounds by diseased animals: are produced by bites of rabid dogs, or inoculation of their virus. The local treatment is much the same as of other poisoned wounds. For hydrophobia, give *Prax. Vernica*, and *Belladonna*. *Hydrophobin* has also been recommended. For other constitutional symptoms, treat according to general principles. —————

Having thus in a brief manner described the nature and treatment of wounds as taught by our Professor and other writers on Surgery; I will close by saying, I have fortunately had the opportunity of witnessing many cases; which were similar in nature, and successfully treated as herein described.